28: Spiro--18 [2] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians-1-2
116, 681, 622, 182, 554 Ifalik

"As in most primitive societies shame and social censureship are the greatest deterrants to immorality. This is particularly true on Ifaluk, where there are no supernatural sanctions. But the ultimate sanctions for moral behavior are the chiefs. It is their approval or disapproval that motivates much of the Ifalukian interpersonal relationships. And this role is felt very consciously by both the chiefs and the people. When discussing the subject of chieftanship, they informed me, that: 'Chief all same pappa this place.... If no chief, all same canoe have no people, canoe turn around. Place, too, by'n by turn around, people fight. Pappa talk to boy, maybe boy no like (i. e., won't obey), for only little bit afraid. But all people afraid chief. Chief work--talk. Chief no talk to people, tell them what they do, all same ship break.'

This is as accurate description of Ifaluk chieftanship as one could want. Besides this very interesting 'ship of state' idea, this statement displays a genuine insight into the real significance of the chiefs in this culture. That the statement reflects not only the chiefs conception of themselves, but also the conception the people have of them, is brought out clearly in the Stewart Emotional Response and Moral Ideology tests, in which the people maintain that they are afraid to be indolent, to steal, or to fight lest they incur the wrath of the chiefs; and conversely, that they are good, generous, etc., because this pleases the chiefs.

This role of being the ultimate sanctioners of the cultural values is very interesting in view of their lack of any punitive power. There are neither police nor prisons on Ifaluk to enforce the mores or punish violations of them. It is true that a murderer or incorrigible thief can be punished by the chiefs by banishment and/or confiscation of property, but such punitive powers must rest on the consent of the people, since they have no physical power to enforce these punishments. What is even more significant is the fact that the mere disapproval of some behavior by the chiefs acts as a sufficient deterrent, and that their approval is one of the strongest motivations for culturally approved behavior."

28: Spiro--18-19
116, 182, 554, 622

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians-1-2
Ifalik

"Further reflection on the nature of Ifaluk society makes us pause even longer over this phenomenon. In theocratic societies, or in societies in which the ruler enjoys divine or magical rights or protection, it is understandable that his demands should be respected. But no such concept of supernatural power or protection obtains in Ifaluk. The chief is a man among men, who happens, it is true, to descend [19] from a particular lineage. Add to this the objective fact of the smallness of the island, in which the child knows everyone from the moment that he begins to perceive and distinguish objects, and every one knows every one else as intimately as one person can know another. These people grow up together, they plan and work together and learn very soon the virtues and vices, abilities and foibles of their fellows. Now the chiefs grow up as part of this process. In huge empires the prince lives apart from the commoners, he grows to adulthood in the court, where few people can know him, so that he can maintain the aura of magical greatness. But on Ifaluk this is impossible. The chief is remembered by practically all of the people, as that young foolish kid, who would never obey his parents, or as my friend with whom I participated in a number of pranks, who is a poor fisherman, or inept carpenter. And suddenly he is thrust into the position of authority, at which time he not only receives the respect of his fellows, but becomes the ultimate sanction of their good behavior. This is indeed a perplexing question, and one to which

we shall return in our discussion of Ifaluk personality and psychology.

The people accept the chief's authority without question. One afternoon I asked a group of men why they obeyed the chiefs. This was obviously a very perplexing question for them. Apparently it had never been articulated before. Obedience to the chiefs is just accepted as part of the natural order of things. After stating the question in a number of different ways, I could get only the stock answer: 'We don't know. Before, before, all the same now.' That is, this is part of our tradition, and inheritance from the past, and we accept it. As we continued the discussion, other points were made, however. 'Suppose no have chief, all people fool. (If) chief see people very bad, he tell them "You no make that. No my talk I talk to you, talk before, talk my house, my place." If another man come, see no chief, very bad.'

What is said in this statement is that the chiefs are the ultimate guarantors of the culture, and its values. If there were no chiefs, the people would be 'fools', or 'make bad', that is, they would violate the mores, and the culture would disintegrate. The presence of the chiefs prevents the people from such violation. For, 'If people talk, no somebody afraid. Chief talk, all people afraid.' That is, the people accept the authority of the chiefs, and abide by their reprimands if they commit a wrong. But a reprimand from another would have little effect, because they fear only the chiefs."

28: Spiro--19-20
116, 622, 182, 115, 554

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians-1-2
Ifalik

"When asked why the chiefs elicit this obedience, and no one else, the answer is immediate--because their lineages are 'more high.' This superiority of descent is accepted implicitly. It is not the person is personally superior, has greater ability or knowledge, but that he is descended from the 'royal family.' The obedience, then, is to the status, not the individual. When I asked, for example, how they felt about obeying a young chief, whom they had ordered around when he was a boy, and who now is their superior, though they probably have greater skills and knowledge than he, they expressed surprise. Why not? Isn't he a member of the lineage of chiefs?

No person could remember one instance of disobedience of a chief. 'Men afraid that chief. (If) one man no like talk for chief, very bad man. All people no like. Why he no like talk for chief?'

I might illustrate this point by one incident in which we were involved. One morning Tom, our interpreter, came to us saying that he would not work with us for a few days since the canoe, that he was building with the assistance of some other man, was not being completed rapidly enough because the other men were not indiligent [sic] in their work, and that he would have to devote more time to the work. Later in the day, he came to me, saying that the chiefs had heard of his not working with [20] us and were angry with him. I told him that I wanted him to complete his work as soon as possible and that

both Dr. Burrows and I would rather he worked on his canoe for a few days. But he looked at me very contritely, and in a very pathetic voice, he answered that the chiefs are 'too angry at me', and therefore he was afraid to work on his canoe because he was afraid of the chiefs. Now this is from a man who had lived in Manilla for four years, who was descended from a chiefly lineage himself, and was next in line for a chieftanship, and who often decried the chiefs to me, impugning their abilities, and calling them 'fool fellows' because they had not had the experiences that he had had."